wherein said composite substance is prepared by mixing the solvent with undried metal particles.

3. (Amended) The composite substance of claim 1, wherein:

said metal particles have an average particle size of 1 μm or smaller.

4. (Amended) The composite substance of claim 1, wherein:

the solvent comprises 2 to 100 parts by weight of the composite substance relative to 100 parts by weight of said metal particles.

6. (Amended) A composite substance for forming a conductive paste, comprising:

a solvent which is compatible with an organic component included in said conductive paste; and

metal-compound particles wetted by said solvent,

wherein said composite substance is prepared by mixing the solvent with undried metal-compound particles.

8. (Amended) The composite substance of claim 6, wherein:

said metal-compound particles have an average particle size of 1μm or smaller.

9. (Amended) The composite substance of claim 6, wherein:

the solvent comprises 2 to 100 parts by weight of the composite substance relative to 100 parts by weight of said metal-compound particles.

10. (Amended) ~~The composite substance~~ of claim 6, further comprising an organic vehicle. = organic component ?

11. (Amended) A conductive paste comprising:

an organic binder;

a composite substance comprising a solvent which is compatible with said organic binder, and metal particles wetted by said solvent; and

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an organic solvent mixed with said organic binder and said composite substance

wherein said composite substance is prepared by mixing the solvent with undried metal particles.

13. (Amended) The conductive paste of claim 11, wherein:

said metal particles have an average particle size of 1 μm or smaller.

14. (Amended) The conductive paste of claim 11, wherein:

the composite substance comprises 2 to 100 parts by weight of the solvent relative to 100 parts by weight of said metal particles.

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15. (Amended) The conductive paste of claim 11, wherein said composite substance further comprises an organic vehicle. = organic binder ?

16. (Amended) A conductive paste comprising:

an organic binder;

a composite substance comprising a solvent which is compatible with said organic binder, and metal-compound particles wetted by said solvent; and

an organic solvent mixed with said organic binder and said composite substance,

wherein said composite substance is prepared by mixing the solvent with undried metal-compound particles.

18. (Amended) The conductive paste of claim 16, wherein:

said metal-compound particles have an average particle size of 1 μm or smaller.

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19. (Amended) The conductive paste of claim 16, wherein:

the composite substance comprises 2 to 100 parts by weight of the solvent relative to 100 parts by weight of said metal-compound particles.

20. (Amended) The conductive paste of claim 16, wherein said composite substance further comprises an organic vehicle. = organic binder ?

23. (Amended) A method for manufacturing a composite substance used to form a conductive paste, comprising the step of:

adding a solvent to undried metal particles which have been washed with water, wherein said solvent is compatible with an organic component included in said conductive paste and is incompatible with water, whereby said water is replaced by said solvent.

24. (Amended) The method of claim 23, wherein:

said solvent is added in an amount of 3 to 30 parts by weight relative to 100 parts by weight of the total quantity of said metal particles.

25. (Amended) The method of claim 23, further comprising the step of:

adding a surface active agent together with said solvent, in an amount of 0.05 to 10.0 parts by weight relative to 100 parts by weight of the entire quantity of said metal particles.

26. (Amended) The method of claim 25, further comprising the step of:

adding a second solvent which is compatible with water.

27. (Amended) The method of claim 26, wherein:

said second solvent is added in an amount of 0.3 to 30 parts by weight relative to 100 parts by weight of the total quantity of said metal particles.

28. (Amended) The method of claim 26, wherein:

said second solvent is acetone.

29. (Amended) A method for manufacturing a composite substance used to form a conductive paste, comprising the step of:

adding a solvent to undried metal-compound particles which have been washed with water, wherein said solvent is compatible with an organic component included in said conductive paste and incompatible with water, whereby said water is replaced by said solvent.

30. (Amended) The method of claim 29, wherein:

said solvent is added in an amount of 3 to 30 parts by weight relative to 100 parts by weight of the total quantity of said metal-compound particles.

31. (Amended) The method of claim 29, further comprising the step of:

adding a surface active agent together with said solvent, in an amount of 0.05 to 10.0 parts by weight relative to 100 parts by weight of the entire quantity of said metal-compound particles.

32. (Amended) The method of claim 31, further comprising the step of:

adding a second solvent which is compatible with water.

33. (Amended) The method of claim 32, wherein:

said second solvent is added in an amount of 0.3 to 30 parts by weight relative to 100 parts by weight of the total quantity of said metal-compound particles.

34. (Amended) The method of claim 32, wherein:

said second solvent is acetone.

35. (Amended) A method for manufacturing a conductive paste, comprising the step of:

mixing an organic binder and an organic solvent with the composite substance of claim 23.

36. (Amended) The method of claim 35, wherein:

said metal particles have an average particle size of 1 μm or smaller.

37. (Amended) The method of claim 35, wherein:

the solvent included in said composite substance is present in an amount of 2 to 100 parts by weight units relative to 100 parts by weight of said metal particles.

38. (Amended) The method of claim 35, wherein:

said composite substance further comprises an organic vehicle.

39. A method for manufacturing a conductive paste, comprising the step of:

mixing an organic binder and an organic solvent with the composite substance of claim 29.

40. (Amended) The method of claim 39, wherein:

said metal-compound particles have an average particle size of 1 μm or smaller.

41. (Amended) The method of claim 39, wherein:

the solvent included in said composite substance is present in an amount of 2 to 100 parts by weight relative to 100 parts by weight of said metal-compound particles.

42. (Amended) ~~The method~~ of claim 39, wherein:

said composite substance further comprises an organic vehicle.

Please cancel without prejudice Claims 2, 5, 7, 12, and 17.

Please add new Claims 43-58 as follows:

43. (New) A composite substance for forming a conductive paste, comprising:

a first solvent, a surface active agent and/or a second solvent, and metal particles,

wherein the first solvent is compatible with an organic component in said conductive paste, the second solvent is compatible with water and the first solvent, and the metal particles are wetted by the first solvent.

When does it take place

44. (New) The composite substance of claim 43, wherein:

said metal particles have an average particle size of 1 μm or smaller.

45. (New) The composite substance of claim 43, wherein the composite substance comprises 2 to 100 parts by weight of the first solvent relative to 100 parts by weight of said metal particles.

46. (New) The composite substance of claim 43, further comprising an organic vehicle.

47. (New) A composite substance for forming a conductive paste, comprising:

a first solvent which is compatible with an organic component included in said conductive paste;

does not exist.

a surface active agent and/or a second solvent which is compatible with water and the first solvent; and

metal-compound particles wetted by said first solvent.

48. (New) The composite substance of claim 47, wherein said metal-compound particles have an average particle size of 1 μm or smaller.

49. (New) The composite substance of claim 47, wherein the composite substance comprises 2 to 100 parts by weight of the first solvent relative to 100 parts by weight of said metal-compound particles.

~~50. (New) The composite substance of claim 47, further comprising an organic vehicle.~~

51. (New) A conductive paste comprising:

an organic binder;

a composite substance comprising a first solvent which is compatible with said organic binder, and metal particles wetted by said first solvent; and

a surface active agent and/or a second solvent which is compatible with water and the first solvent.

52. (New) The conductive paste of claim 51, wherein said metal particles have an average particle size of 1 μm or smaller.

53. (New) The conductive paste of claim 51, wherein the composite substance comprises 2 to 100 parts by weight of the solvent relative to 100 parts by weight of said metal particles.

54. (New) The conductive paste of claim 51, wherein the composite substance further comprises an organic vehicle.

55. (New) A conductive paste comprising:

an organic binder;

a composite substance including a first solvent which is compatible with said organic binder, and metal-compound particles wetted by said first solvent; and

~~a surface active agent and/or a second solvent which is compatible with water and the first solvent.~~

56. (New) The conductive paste of claim 55, wherein said metal-compound particles have an average particle size of 1 μm or smaller.

57. (New) The conductive paste of claim 55, wherein the composite substance comprises 2 to 100 parts by weight of the solvent relative to 100 parts by weight of said metal-compound particles.

58. ~~(New) The conductive paste of claim 55,~~ wherein the composite substance further comprises an organic vehicle.

SUPPORT FOR THE AMENDMENTS

The amendments to the claims are supported at page 5, lines 4-21. The new claims are supported by the claims as originally filed and at page 6, line 7 to page 7, line 5. No new matter is believed to be added by entry of these amendments. Claims 1, 3, 4, 6, 8-11, 13-16, and 18-58 are in the case, of which Claims 1, 3, 4, 6, 8-11, 13-16, 18-20, and 43-58 are active.

REMARKS

Applicants would like to thank Examiner Lam for the helpful and courteous discussion with Applicants' representative on April 29, 2002. During the discussion, Applicants pointed out that the composite substance and conductive paste of the present invention differ from those of the prior art because the composite substance or conductive paste of the present invention are prepared by a process comprising mixing water-wet metal or metal compound particles (i.e., undried metal or metal-compound particles) with a solvent, thereby forming a composite substance or conductive paste in which the metal or metal compound particles do not tend to form aggregates. Composite substances and conductive pastes formed by conventional